

2012-2022 Draft Long Term Plan Statement Form

Statement Form

Points to remember when making a statement:

- Please print clearly. As people will read your statement, please make sure it can be easily photocopied, read and understood.
- All statements are considered public under the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act, and may be published and made available to elected members and the public.
- Your statement will not be returned to you once lodged with Council - please keep a copy for your reference.
- We will respond in writing to every statement we receive. Please ensure you provide appropriate contact details so that our response gets back to you.
- The hearing of statements will take place on Tuesday 15 May and will continue on 16 and 17 May if required.

How to get this form to us:

Mail to: Draft Long Term Plan Statements,
Whangarei District Council,
Private Bag 9023, Whangarei 0148

Fax to: 09 438 7632

Email to: mailroom@wdc.govt.nz

Deliver to: Customer Services, Forum North, Rust Ave,
Whangarei or Ruakaka Service Centre, Takutai Place,
Ruakaka

The closing date for statements is 23 April 2012.

Presenter Details:

Name:	Warren Slater		
I am writing this statement (✓ box)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> as an individual	<input type="checkbox"/> on behalf of an organisation	
Organisation name:	N/A		
Postal address:	'Kauri View' Riding Downs Way R.D.9. Whangarei 0179		
Home phone:	09 4594992	Work phone:	N/A
Mobile:	0274 948955	Email address:	w.d.slater@xtra.co.nz
Do you wish to be heard in support of your statement? (✓ box)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	
If you do wish to be heard, which date would best suit you? (✓ box)	15 May	16 May <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	17 May <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
At the same time as Pat Slater			

Key issues Council is interested in receiving your feedback on:

Economic Growth

We believe Economic Growth will help secure a better future for our Community. Should Council focus some of our efforts to support this?

Yes

No

Why?

Focus needs to be on making Whangarei a more business friendly town in which to operate. It is the businesses that ~~make our economy grow. I have heard from many business owners that have had difficulty dealing with council over leases, compliance, signage, or some in the purchasing of properties. Go for a walk and take a look around at the empty premises. It's not good seeing businesses closing down.(15 in the last month we have heard)~~

Sense of Place

Council is proposing a number of operational and capital expenditure projects to support the development of a positive Sense of Place for our current and future residents - do you support the concept of building a 'Sense of Place' for our District

Yes No

Why? In our opinion 'Sense of Place' is just a bunch of fancy words allowing some with egos to undertake the projects THEY so desire to make their employment resume look great. To make Whangarei a 'Sense of Place', how about some good sound maintenance on what we already have and make it better. We have a museum on which the roof leaks; let's fix that. We have a harbour that is our most natural resource and council allows it to be closed up to 11 months of the year through contamination of sewage spills they should be responsible for. We have foot paths that local and visitors had difficulty walking or moving over. I could use lots of paper and loads of ink so don't you think it's time to get back to basics? Many in the community do expect us getting back to basic sound infrastructure and now we find the government is calling for it also.

Hundertwasser Art Centre

The proposed Hundertwasser Art Centre is considered by Council to be a unique opportunity to bring about change and economic growth for our District through an expanding visitor industry. Do you support Council in progressing and part funding this project?

Yes No

Why? This seems a done deal and council debt is too high. If our level of debt was either zero or far less than it currently is, my approval of such a project may be different. I do not believe in increasing debt for non essential projects. Besides in my opinion, Council has not done due diligence in the investigation and the figures are nothing but stargazing through a crystal ball. You can call me negative but I gave up pushing the proverbial up-hill years ago, so not going to waste my time trying to convince you otherwise. We could talk till we are blue in the face, so I am not about to even give you that satisfaction.

Wastewater

Over recent years Council has had a considerable focus on improving the District's Wastewater systems. This plan continues that focus with further significant work scheduled throughout the 10 years of the plan - have we got it right?

Yes No

Why? **BUT** focus needs to be on the cause. It is proven the cause is rain! When it rains we have issues; do investigation into inflows and infiltration and undertake remedial work to fix the problems. Or do earlier Waste Water Engineers have concerns what may be uncovered, by their earlier work, if these present problems are investigated? Fix the real problem – It isn't going to go away all by itself.

Levels of Service

In developing this draft Plan Council had to carefully consider the impacts of its proposed direction on Levels of Service across the organisation. Do you think we have got the balance right between Levels of Service and those things that we are proposing in order to enhance our District?

Yes

No

Why? As normal the focus is on what staff and councilors want; not necessarily what the community needs or wants. It is time to go in the direction of those paying the bills. Still too many funds going into sub standard roads and not into sewerage facilities, foot paths, basic infrastructure, etc.

Rates Review

Do you agree with Council's preferred option to charge rates based on fixed sector allocations?

Yes

No

Why? You are more than likely going to do what you want anyway, so whose opinions matters?

General Feedback

Items in the draft LTP I support or oppose, the reasons why and/or alternative options I would like to see included. *(Please note relevant page number if applicable)*

It is obvious the council's priorities are outlined on this form. There are other issues that are extremely important to residents in the District and these have been omitted.

Other Comments

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Whangarei - It's Time to Move Forward Summary -

It is most interesting to see on the summary that only 'Councils Important Priorities' are listed.

They have **failed** to list important items such as Hikurangi Swamp issues, Gomez Road Noisy Sports Park, Footpaths, No third Hockey turf, Clean healthy harbour, debt, OIA's, parking, signage to name just a few.

These issues are of the utmost importance to those affected. Coincidentally these people are the ones that pay the bills.

Remember 'Council Owns Nothing'. Often properties, projects, roads etc are referred to, as Councils.

This is far from correct it is the ratepayers that own it so it is time you genuinely started listening to them. They are the ones that matter.

We understand it's the 'Sense of Place' items that spin your cogs and not the basic infrastructure you are entrusted to undertake.

Gomez Road Noisy Motorsports Park - This project has some fatal flaws. Has it been concocted by some who appear hell bent in making their personal resumes look good?; Like a bus terminal without buses, a bridge that's too big to lift, a bus stop without shelter, a covered over bridge with no wind shelter. The list goes on.

I have personally attended some of these meetings and the way residents have been treated is nothing short of disgusting. In a responsible organization, disciplinary action would have been taken against the perpetrators. This project has not taken into account the quality of lifestyle that it will destroy.

There must be some underlying reasons why any reasonable person would want to create so much despair for these people. Put it in your back yard and see how you would like it. Cr Greg Martin tossed his toys out of the cot when the Targa Rally was going past his place, on one day, yet you expect these people to accept a Noisy Sports Park with little limitations. I personally have been a competitor in motor sports and can see what impact they can create. At present where the different codes are located is spreading the issues around the whole district, rather than it being focused in one area and disturbing those that reside in a clean green environment.

Hikurangi Swamp Scheme - Support an investigation and better management of the scheme. We are all affected by issues, including councils, targeted rate payers, all on the Hikurangi Swamp should be embraced and included to work together towards a solution.

There should be no exclusions.

This area by many accounts has not been managed as effectively as it should have been in the past.

There needs to be a professional approach to ensure this viable productive area has safeguards in place to enable it to produce to its full capabilities all the time.

Hockey - Hockey is a growing sport that has out grown its 2 turfs. We are on the understanding that the third turf has been deferred by influence of one councilor (who is President of an oval ball game) as long as another sitting councilor is involved with Hockey. It appears there has been no effect on the funding stream by council, to the oval ball game. Some need to sort out their differences to avoid some sports codes suffering.

Other Sports Codes - Other sports codes believe, as we do, that they were used as pawns to get approval for the 'Multi Events Centre' but dumped when the rugby stadium was completed. It's time council treated all sports codes with the duty of care expected of them, by our residents.

Footpaths – It is common knowledge that Whangarei has \$50million worth of foot path repairs due for remedial work. Only \$1 million is budgeted for per year, which equals 50 years of work waiting to be done. Can anyone use the same crystal ball that was used on the future fortunes for the Hundertwasser Art Centre, to estimate how many dollars of footpath repairs will be required in 2062?

Debt – In my opinion debt is soaring out of control. The council has been irresponsible and negligent in allowing debt to climb to its current level. Surely a smart council would be focused on reducing debt and shelve away the 'wish lists' and focus on the needs, not the wants. Our Financial Committee, with an air of arrogance, has had total disregard for the current financial crisis the world has been experiencing by allowing our debt to rise instead of reducing it. We have never professed to have all the answers but it appears you don't either, but the banks sure love you as you are making them prosper at the expense of the ratepayers.

OIA – The process of obtaining information through the Official Information Act although legal is flouted by council. We know of instances where information is withheld, or incorrectly given. It's a bit like pulling teeth, a slow and drawn out process this council partakes in extremely well to the limits. We can access information from other councils without the need of an OIA. Do you wonder if those other councils have no fear of the truth or have nothing to hide?

Culture of Council – Does it come from the top and trickle down? There have been a number of instances where members of the public have been treated poorly and rudely. This sadly has been at the upper level of management and those elected into more senior positions. (More than happy to give details if required) This must be the 'accepted' culture from those higher in rank or appropriate action would have been taken. This is an ever ongoing issue so maybe its a change at the top that is needed.

Parking Meters - The parking meters in much of the town have issues. People get frustrated having to go from meter to meter to find one that operates efficiently. Many people don't really have an issue paying for a service, but don't like being messed about. The number of the machines that have malfunction issues is too high. Either fix them or have a plan in place to allow tickets to be cancelled. Maybe Cr John Williamson may have some ideas?

Pensioner flats – I understand there are 146. I have seen a few of these and it is a great facility that is available to our seniors. Sadly many need a good spruce up like other council managed amenities. Sometimes just a coat of paint would make them look far more presentable than many are currently. It is basic maintenance.

Mander Park – It is an absolute disgrace the way that this issue has been handled. It is not imperative to have a free left turn lane exiting Central Avenue; traffic counts prove that. Again, the way some in our society have been treated in this issue, the way they have been spoken to, is unacceptable. Comments on record from senior elected are why people have lost respect in this and earlier issues and fail to stand at meetings. Respect doesn't come with a title. 'Respect is earned' and Morris you have not earned respect, to say the least, by the way you have treated people. They need a policy to protect heritage and land mark trees.

Lower Hatea bridge – A project that has been pushed through to suit the wants of some. The % of subsidy was reduced from 62% to 50% to make it happen and the traffic numbers don't stack up. In a time of financial crisis it wasn't the time to go for a project of such magnitude when it wasn't really a critical need. I will be very surprised if the project comes in under \$30m. Like many think, it will blow out to about \$50m. Just a bit more debt to make the financiers smile more.

Blue Goose - More information should be forthcoming about the intentions of the future of the area known as the Blue Goose.

Signage - There have been a number of instances in this town where some business operators have been treated very different than other 'selected business owners' in relation to signage. It is time all were treated equally and personal attacks on some, were to cease.

Disability Sector – There needs to be more attention paid to the catering of for the disability sector. 25% of our population has some form of disabilities. We understand that one council building fails to have soap and drying facilities in the disabled toilet area. This is an area where more attention to detail is paramount when catering for equipment necessary in these service areas.

Statement Form - There needs to be a huge amount of focus in making on line forms more user friendly. We have had numerous people ring us and they had had difficulty in even **locating** them on the council website, before using them.

GE – It is pleasing to see the cautious approach WDC has taken with GE. A cautious approach in the use of Genetically modified organisms in the Region needs to be undertaken. Costs for a cleanup of something going bad could be detrimental and / or ongoing to the local economy. Those in our community who are well informed in these issues, should have consideration of their comments made.

Library – I compliment WDC in maintaining the community library to its high standard. Keeping up with technology in this area is of the utmost importance and WDC has done well in this area. This provides education on many levels as well as recreational elements.

We would like to thank the Whangarei District Council, Councillors and staff for this process and allowing us to speak to it. We acknowledge the work that staff put into this.

I have been hard hitting but want you to know if I was in your place I would like such honest feedback given to me; I would take it on the chin, this type of feedback gives a darn good starting point of where one's community is at and what they want for their district. Please take it in the vein it was given; with passion for the place we have chosen to live in.